



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
3170 EAST MAIN STREET
CANON CITY, COLORADO 81212



FRONT RANGE RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
CANON CITY, CO
July 6, 2005

MINUTES

Group 1

Virginia Patton
Gene King
Charles Rech
Jim Coleman

Group 2

Kaaren K. Hardy
Donna Murphy
Josh Osterhoudt
Larry Strohl
Lucy Bambrey

Group 3

Keith McNew
Jim Bensberg
Michael Bush

RAC Members not in attendance: Joe Duda, Loren Whittemore and Rick Thompson.

GUESTS: B.J. Jones, Senator Allard's Colorado Springs Office; Ross Manley, Senator Allard's Pueblo Office; Sal Pace, Congressman Salazar's Pueblo Office; Ellen Cesarone, Congressman Hefley's Colorado Springs Office; SeEtta Moss, Arkansas Valley Audubon Society;.

BLM/FS PERSONNEL: Roy Masinton, Ken Smith, Linda McGlothlen, Sarah Mavin, Jim Rhett, Dave Walker, Pete Zwaneveld.

COUNCIL BUSINESS: Roy welcomed Lucy Bambrey to the RAC, she will represent Archaeological & Historical interest and fills the position vacated by Leslie Wildesen.

Roy also mentioned there are 13 nominees for the 5 positions on the Council and hopefully a selection will be made by mid-August. Members whose term will end August 20 are Virginia Patton, Karren Hardy, Lucy Bambrey, Keith McNew and Loren Whittemore. Kaaren Hardy and Keith McNew did not re-apply and were both thanked by Roy for their work and time on the Council and were presented plaques of appreciation.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: SeEtta Moss of the Arkansas Valley Audubon Society commented on the Browns Canyon Wilderness Study Area and was complementary that BLM let a recent fire burn in this remote area, since there was not an issue of harming people or other interests.

Vera Smith, Conservation Director for the Colorado Mountain Club, shared a letter with the RAC. The letter stated they are engaged in recreation issues on public lands and for

many years they have been asking Congress to increase the dollars for recreation and conservation programs at the Federal level.

MANAGERS UPDATE:

Sarah Mavin the South Park District Ranger, USFS: The Forest is working on its Grasslands Management Plan and held meetings in Springfield KS, La Junta and Pueblo. It is going to look different from the previous plans that have been done. The Grassland Plan is scheduled to be finished over the course of this winter. Starting in the fall they will begin working on the Pike and San Isabel portion of the Forest Plan Revision. On other Forest-wide issues they continue to work on the Grazing Allotment Management Plan, are finishing up the planning process in the South Park Area, and intend to have the Environmental Analysis out by the end of this month. They have done a lot of reforestation in the Hayman Fire area. Specific to South Park they are working with a local group, Trust for Public Lands, to address the recreational use, heritage resource, impacts on private land and environmental issues in the Mosquito Range.

Jim Rhett, San Luis Valley Travel Management Update: There has been an interesting development on the Rio Grand River involving a survey issue on the east side of the River. After looking at the records a few years back, they found that the original Congressional Legislation passed in 1864 had designated the public land boundary. That was the piece of legislation that recognized the land grant as private property and set the boundary at the high water mark on the east side of the River, defined as the 19 year high water mark. BLM cadastral survey put in 23 markers along that side of the river and surveyed out to the boundary so BLM would know exactly where it was. As part of that process BLM sent letters to all of the land owners and told them what they were doing. Someone has been writing anonymous letters to land owners and complaining about the BLM land grab and the Counties new zoning ordinance.

In the San Luis Valley, the BLM is hiring a Law Enforcement Officer, from the Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia. He should be here in August. Mark Marshall left and went to Oregon so the Recreation Specialist position will be advertised. They had a field trip with some BLM folks and local extreme jeepers to about the creation of an extreme jeep area.

Roy Masinton, Royal Gorge Field Manager: The Bureau has some proposed revisions to the Grazing Regulations. The EA that is currently out on these proposed changes in regulations is available in hard copy or on a CD. (Copies will be mailed to Virginia Patton, Michael Bush and Jim Coleman.)

Soapy Hills Forest Restoration Project: The Field Office is looking at treating about 170 acres in this 500 acre project area south of Highway 9 in the Tallahassee Creek Area. This is primarily for forest health issues to reduce the fuels, and improve wildlife habitat and protect the watershed. The biomass that is removed will go to the Aquila Power Plant in Canon City. Royal Gorge is one of 4 pilot projects nationwide and will receive funding to support those efforts for the next several years. Most of the trees that will be

left are the large standing ponderosa pine. Contracts will probably be let this fall with work expected to begin in the Spring of 2006.

BLM has a Single Engine Air Tanker (SEAT) based at the Fremont County Airport for use in fighting fires. The State Forest Service is also utilizing the base to position one of their tankers at the airport.

At Congressman Hefley's request, the Royal Gorge Field Office and the San Isabel National Forest are trying to identify an appropriate boundary for a potential Browns Canyon Wilderness Area. Congressman Hefley is looking at the Browns Canyon WSA, possibly a few hundred acres of adjacent BLM public lands to the south of the WSA and some National Forest lands to the east, for possible inclusion in legislation.

At the November 3 meeting the Council identified several issues they wanted to be involved in over the year. This is a mid-year check on those issues. - More coordination with the other RAC's on some issues. So far the ability to make that happen has been limited. Hopefully we can work out something. - Intergovernmental cooperation on law enforcement issues. At the January meeting, John Silence, Special Agent in Charge from the State Office discussed BLM's efforts to coordinate with other Agencies and the Counties. The next two issues were: - consider further development of trail standards and - consider educational opportunities for OHV use between agencies and involved organizations. These need some clarification about what is expected. There was a discussion on the need to standardize how trails are identified for difficulty, condition, what is appropriate use of the trail, etc. It was decided BLMs participation in the "Stay the Trail" campaign is a good way to work with other organizations and get some public education and information to mechanized and other motorized users of trails. BLM will also be putting the "Stay the Trails" stickers on carsonite trail signs to help make the public aware. The last issue, - Continuing updates on the Browns Canyon WSA potential Wilderness proposal, has been ongoing.

Pete Zwaneveld, South Park Update: The BLM has prepared a national programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on wind energy development through Argon National Laboratory. The Royal Gorge Field Office's Resource Management Plan has nothing that deals with wind energy but have received 2 phone calls on locating wind farms. This EIS will amend the Resource Management Plan to talk about mitigation measures for Standard Operating Procedures for locating wind farms. The Field Office has already identified areas where wind farms are not appropriate. When this EIS decision comes out, the Council will be briefed.

BLM is going through a process to do official consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service on Threatened and Endangered Species as it relates to the Resource Management Plan. The State Office is contracting out an Environmental Impact Statement that is going to do official consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service on a lot of species. This is statewide and effects each of the Field Offices.

There are 3 alternatives for the South Park Plan Amendment on Land Tenure Adjustment. The proposed action includes those parcels that have the greatest resource value and are

focused on the northern part of the Valley with a few parcels on the south end. There is a lot of conservation easements established in South Park and BLM public land is adjacent to those. Alternative B is “no action,” Lastly Alternative C includes those parcels that were border-line and could have gone either way, and generally were put in the disposal category. This gives Roy some options to recommend disposal or retention of those parcels. This is about ready to go to staff to review the Environmental Assessment. That will probably take the rest of July, maybe August and then it will be out to the public for review and comment. There will be a public meeting in Fairplay during that 30 day review period. Pete hopes the Sub-committee will be able to attend this meeting. After the public comments there will be a recommendation to the State Director for a proposed decision which is subject to a 30 day protest period. Any protests go to the Director’s Office in Washington and usually get resolved in about 2 or 3 months.

Dave Walker, Arkansas River Travel Management Plan Update: The next set of public meetings has been scheduled for the Arkansas River Travel Management Plan; August 4th at 6 P.M. in Salida and August 8th at 6 P.M. in Canon City. There are 14 different sub-units identified as a result of the last public meetings and specific issues were identified in each of those sub-units. The focus of these meetings in August is to obtain public input to help identify the goals and objectives for the Plan. The RAC members were encouraged to attend.

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Tour of specific sites in the Arkansas River Travel Management Planning Area: Stops were made at the Parkdale Recreations Site, and sites within the Texas Creek sub-unit to discuss issues identified within that area. Within the Texas Creek OHV area, one of the important issues is the majority of the area is identified as “open.” Dave explained there are 3 types of OHV areas; “open” areas where you can drive just about anywhere off the road, “closed” where the area is completely closed to any off road motorized use and “limited” areas, which include most of the public lands managed by the Field Office. In the Travel Management Plan it is proposed to change the open areas to limited areas and to limit motorized uses to designated routes.

The next Front Range RAC meeting is scheduled for September 7 in Canon City.

The meeting was adjourned at 5 p.m.

Keith McNew
Vice-Chairman
Front Range Resource Advisory Council

Roy L. Masinton
Royal Gorge Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management